

Request for Funding Scope Analysis Phase

Date:

November 7, 2007

Project Name:

Web-Based Local Government and Annual Report Database

Requesting Agency:

Iowa Department of Management

Project Point-of-Contact:

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Project Sponsor:

Iowa Department of Management, Dick Oshlo, 515 281-5201

Goal:

To establish a centralized database and application with Internet accessibility that would allow local government authorities to prepare and certify budgets and submit annual reports each year. The target is to provide functionality and features at least comparable to the existing Excel spreadsheets currently used. This architecture will eliminate the current process of submitting budget via email and writing of valuation data that can introduce errors and dropped data.

Importantly, the goal is also to make budget and annual report information available on-line as soon as the data is reported by the local government authority and make county and other local government budget and annual report information available to the general public for legal and other purposes, accessible at any time, day or night.

Project Purpose:

This project will create a web-based application for the local government budget and annual report process, eliminating the need for the Department of Management (DOM) to deliver and support individualized Excel files to local governments on annual basis.

By going to web entry and a centralized database, we will be able to eliminate duplicative reading and writing of the budgets and annual reports. Currently, the data is entered into the desktop budget software, or by hand in a few instances, and then saved to a file. That file is then sent to the DOM. The DOM then takes that file and loads the data into a SQL database (for counties) and a mainframe database for counties and all other authorities. The new system would allow local governments to directly load budget and annual report data into, and edit the data on, the existing or other central SQL database.

This system will be able to make preliminary budget and annual report data available on-line, saving significant time and effort for the public and any other parties, including the general public, looking for such data as well as for the local governments. Currently someone wanting preliminary data for a local government must contact that local government directly. The new system would eliminate that process and allow them to get the data from the database via the Internet, with a minimum of effort.

Background:

The Iowa Code requires governments are required to prepare and adopt a budget annually, with due dates varying from January to April. Some local governments are also required to submit annual reports. The DOM provides Excel workbooks, which are used to create files for reporting the data. The workbooks are then posted to the DOM website for downloading. The DOM has to make sure that the workbooks will work over the wide range of Windows operating systems and office suites used by local governments. The workbooks contain numerous error checks to ensure data is entered correctly.

The completed budget and annual report files are then emailed to the DOM. Files for County budgets and annual reports are then imported into the existing SQL database. Detailed reports can then be

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generated from this database. For other budget files, limited property tax data is extracted from the files for entry into the Mainframe database. Limited reports can be generated from the mainframe.

For those interested in detailed information from County data, reports can be generated upon request of the Department of Management. Some users (Department of Human Services, Legislative Services Agency, Iowa State Association of Counties and the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation) request the entire database; for those users, they are requested to bring a laptop to the DOM so that staff can load the database and necessary software onto the laptop.

This project will also satisfy the requirements of House File 923 as passed and signed by the Governor during the 2007 legislative session. This legislation requires that the Department of Management make county budgets available by "electronic means."

Expected Results in this Project:

The move to a web-based budget and annual report database will allow the General Public and other interested parties to have 24/7 web access to local government budget and annual report information. Local governments will be able to enter budget and annual report data using a standardized platform. Moving to a web-based system will allow the State to make essential information about local government budgets and annual reports available to the public for their general usage and to lawyers for legal purposes such as public filings and offering statements which will help to reduce errors and expedite availability of information.

Request:

This request is for \$20,000 for the Scope Analysis phase.

Resources Being Contributed:

Department of Management staff will be available to work with ITE staff in defining the scope of the project.

Interested Parties/Recipients of this Service:

General Public
Local Government Officials
Iowa County Auditors
Iowa Department of Management
Iowa Department of Human Services
Legislative Services Agency
Iowa State Association of Counties
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
